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21 August 1957

Chief, D/S

Chief, S/TR

Request for Additional Data on Finnish-Soviet Rail Traffic

REFERENCE: S/TR Evaluation of [REDACTED]

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Background

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1. Referenced series [REDACTED] reports give data on amount of traffic moving between the USSR and Finland. These studies have been of considerable value to commodity specialists studying the flow of certain vital materials to and from the USSR, and have also been of interest to this office as a source of basic information on Finnish-Soviet rail traffic.

2. As indicated in referenced evaluation (which was coordinated with Petroleum Branch, and with Administrative Assistant for Materials Division), however, these reports are tantalizing in that they indicate the availability of a large volume of basic information which would be of even greater value than the [REDACTED] reports, which appear to be simply a summary. The basic source materials are undoubtedly either freight car waybills or train consist sheets, which probably give much detailed information on each car moving between Finland and the USSR.

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3. This information could be a major source of data for the study of Soviet freight car production and inventory; Soviet railroad operations, including net load per car by commodity, and average speed of freight movement in the USSR; Soviet points of origin and destination of specific commodities; and possibly even amount of each commodity produced at each plant.

Requirements

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1. If the basic source of information for these summary [REDACTED] reports is freight car waybills, freight train consist sheets, or similar documents, it is requested that as many as possible of the following items be obtained for each freight car: a) freight car [REDACTED] b) freight car type (2 or 4 axle; box, flat, refrigerator, tank, open top, etc.), c) commodity carried, d) tonnage of freight, e) origin of commodity, f) destination of commodity, g) date of shipment, h) date of receipt, i) distance from origin to destination, j) freight rate charged, k) freight car seal date,

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2. Data given in CE summary reports would be more valuable if the term "Number of Rail Cars" were defined. The Soviets count a two-axle car as one "rail car" and a four-axle car as two "rail cars." Or, the number given may simply be a physical unit count, in which each car is counted once, irrespective of whether it is a two or four axle car.

3. Data on "average weight of rail cars" would be more valuable if this term were defined. "Average weight of rail cars" will vary, depending on whether the number of "Rail Cars" is based on the Soviet method of counting, or whether each car is counted as one car regardless of the number of axles. It would be desirable to know if "average weight of rail cars" means the average gross weight of the freight car (tare weight of empty car plus contents), or the average weight of freight in the car only.

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